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PARTY PROPAGANDISTS AND NIGHT

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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PARTY PROPAGANDISTS AND NIGHT
SCHOOL EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Following are translations of articles taken from the Chinese-language newspapers Peiping Jih-pao and Kuang-min Jih-pao. Titles, publication data, names of authors, and page numbers are given below.

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I. ALWAYS BE A LOYAL AND SINCERE PROPAGANDIST FOR THE PARTY

Peiping Jih-pao, Peiping,
23 May 1960, page 3

Li Haueh-ao

Like the other works of Chairman Mao, his "Round Table Conference at Yen-an on Literature and Arts," will always be a source of inspiration. Whenever one reads it, one will always get some new insight, new education, new encouragement, new strength.

The proletarian literature is "an essential part of the entire revolutionary machinery." It is thus an effective weapon used "to unite and educate the people, and to attack and destroy the enemy." Ever since I first heard this forceful slogan, it has been ringing in my ears. It has produced the same effect as a bugle call to battle; it provides the incentive to make one march forward and fight.

As a young printer and a member of the Chinese Communist Party, I have never been silent in either political or productive matters under the incentive of the effervescent life of the past few years. In my writings I have used all of my strength in praising the brilliant leadership of Chairman Mao and the intense enthusiasm of my fellow workers, in broadcasting the party's policies, and in denouncing the enemy. Yet, I have often thought of the inadequacy of my individual efforts. If I have produced the slightest effect in stimulating those who had read or heard of my work, then I shall have fulfilled all I could possibly desire.

There are some people who still maintain that mixing politics with literature harms the level of artistic standards. This is the capitalist viewpoint of literature. For to a champion of proletarian literature the primary and basic duty is to serve the proletariat politically. We do not underestimate the importance of artistic quality and we have striven persistently to better our performance in this area. For only by doing this can we express more effectively the content of our thinking. But if we should ever depart from the guiding ideas of Chairman Mao on literature and the arts and abandon reconstruction and the political struggle while burying ourselves in the wast products of the "ivory tower," we shall certainly sink into the capitalist mire of "art for art's sake." On this point I have repeatedly sounded the alarm to myself.

Under the guiding light of Chairman Mao's thinking and to the accompaniment of the various socialist achievements of the "Great Leap Forward," the literary expressions of the workers are becoming more creative day by day. Many people not only are advancing forward in the productive and technical revolution, but also are distinguishing themselves by their artistic creativeness. Take ourselves, for example: poems and posters have already become an essential part of our workaday life. They surround every phase of our political and productive work. On every wall and along every corridor there are poems and songs expressing the desire to strive ceaselessly for the party. These expressions are taking the form of a competition through artistic mediums. Their encouragements have produced impressive results in the productive and technical revolution. The workers are proudly telling each other "If the sky has a handle, we can lift it; if the earth has a ring, we can raise it. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao, what task is there that we cannot tackle?" Whenever my thoughts turn to this, I practically burst with strength.

In the present highly favorable circumstances, I want to bind myself even closer to the affairs of the party on this 18th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's "Round Table Conference at Yen-an on Literature and Arts." I shall write whatever the party demands of me; I shall write the way the party wants me to write. I want to pledge to the party: from now on, besides executing faithfully the tasks assigned to me by the party, I shall study assiduously, always heed the words of Chairman Mao, and always be a loyal and sincere propagandist for the party.

II. THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD AN-KANG NIGHT COLLEGE

Kuang-ming Jih-pao, Peiping,
20 May 1960, page 3

Unsigned article

The An-Kang Night College was established in June 1953. After nearly 71 years of continuous growth, it has expanded from the original four classes and some 260 students to the present 30 classes and some 1,300 students. In these years the An-Shan Iron and Steel Company not only has built dormitories, but also has set up laboratory equipments for this college. Already two groups of students have graduated (in 1956, 66 students graduated from the factory-management department; last summer another 57 graduated from this department). During the "Great Leap Forward" of 1958, the decision was taken to merge this college with two other steel schools into the An-Shan Iron and Steel University. At present the An-Kang Night College is one of the most vital parts of the An-Shan Iron and Steel University. It is also a most important institution in the training of highly competent technicians while they work.

At present the An-Kang Night College offers such specialized courses as iron and steel smelting, metallic pressure computation, mechanical drawing for metallurgical industries, electrification in industrial enterprises, industrial and civil architecture, computers, and chemical engineering. While a large percentage of the student body still consists of graduates from technical secondary schools, who show only average performance, the ratio of students from the working class has been noticeably on the increase in the last few years. In the past, the college had put special emphasis on the quality and quantity of knowledge possessed by students at the time of admission (chiefly their level of culture). The enforcement of rigorous standards for the entrance examinations placed stumbling blocks in the way of the admission of the workers. After the rectification campaign, with the reaffirmation of the college's function as the nourishing ground of intellectuals from the working class, the decision was taken to increase the ratio of workers among the student body. A new admission policy was adopted which placed on a favorable basis those members of the working class who had shown initiative and leadership. Thus the number of students from the working class jumped from two at the beginning of the college to the present 396, or 29% of the entire student body.

Regarding the 6 years' growth of the An-Kang Night College, the following preliminary remarks are relevant.

I. The Night College has Popularized Higher Education, Fostered Cadres, and Pushed Forward the Technical Revolution

The after-working-hours vocational education program within the industries is an important means of training technical personnel at a rapid rate; the Night College is an important example of this program at work. When the An-kang Night College was first established, there were many who were doubtful of the college's capacity to maintain a college level for the students. But after 6 years' practice, the accumulating evidence points out the fact that the 123 graduates we have turned out (66 of whom have specialized in various fields) are the equals of full-time college students. From now on we are going to turn out even more talents.

Because the educational program of the Night College concentrates on the productive, practical, or utilitarian side of knowledge, it stimulates the progress of technical revolution in the factories and mines. As some students remarked: "When we received construction assignments in the past, we often felt ourselves woefully inadequate. But having studied a few years at the Night College, we have raised our level of performance, so that we are confident of solving the technical problems." One graduate, comrade Wu I-ming, who once held a drafting job after graduating from secondary school, is now a technical designer. Because of his persistent attendance at the Night College, he has raised his technical and scientific competence. He has already designed a derrick which is finding great application in iron smelting. Another example is comrade Wu Hsiao-ling, a former technician at a metallurgical factory (he is now being transferred to another factory). Because of his studies at the Night College, he was able to effect technical improvements within his factory, winning for himself the title of Labor Hero and raising his status in 1956 to that of an engineer. Still another example is Tai Hsi-liang, a major in electrical engineering (he was formerly a technician at an electrical laboratory and is now being transferred to the steel factory at Pao-Tou). After his studies in electrical engineering, he used his knowledge to solve the various problems of generators in the main factory. Finally, we take the example of comrade Chen Fen-tung, another graduate of electrical engineering, who was a mere apprentice when he began his factory work in 1946. He is now a computer technician as well as an administrative chief. Since 1950 he has thoroughly applied himself to the courses in the after-working-hours vocational education program, and his

progress in the technical fields was rapid. His professional training and technical education made it possible for him to design a "100-watt electrical current transformer," a "50-watt filament transformer," a "triplex knife switch filter," and portable electrical distribution boards. Thus the studies in electronics and electrical engineering find their rewards in the repair of electronic and electrical instruments. There are numerous other examples similar to those just cited.

II. The After-Working-Hours Vocational Education Program Must Follow the Educational Policies of the Party

The party's educational policy is geared to the political service of the proletariat by integrating education with production. This is the policy by which the after-working-hours vocational education program must be guided. In implementing this policy, the first consideration involves following the present class line of the party: open the gates wide to the workers and peasants! After several years' work in recruiting prospective students, we find that a more suitable procedure consists of a combination of entrance examinations and individual considerations. This not only guarantees the quality of the students, but also helps to gear the college curriculum to the practices which the industry employs in the training of its cadres. But once admission procedures are out of the way, a student's curriculum must be geared to his special needs and limitations. For elementary students the emphasis should be placed on courses with problem assignments as well as with adequate study hours. Otherwise, even though a student is admitted to the college, it will be very difficult for him to stay in.

Another guiding idea is to relate the after-working-hours vocational education program closely to production. In various specialized courses we are fitting the essential needs of actual steel production at An-Shan into the concrete conditions of the classroom. For the duration of study hours we are maintaining the principle of "unbroken study at fixed hours." It was only during the period of the anti-rightists rectification campaign of 1957 that we held no classes for 4 weeks. Again in the period of the nation-wide steel-producing campaign, we stopped classes for 3 months. But these are exceptions. Under ordinary conditions we do not stop classes, even when production work is very intensive. Only thus can we maintain the college standard and insure adequate time for study.

In the application of the college curriculum to production, we feel the necessity of using certain teaching methods. To implement the aim of integrating education with production, the graduates of the Night College are required to assimilate actual working data into their graduation projections or technical special reports.

In order to improve the coordination of the party's educational policies, we must help strengthen the party's leadership and follow persistently its political direction. Because this point has not received adequate stress in the past, the result has been a one-sided cultural education that ignores the need of political indoctrination. After the rectification campaign and with the party's leadership strengthened, the political atmosphere of the college vastly improved. This improvement is felt not only in the thinking of the college instructors, but also in the political activities and intellectual outlook of the students.

III. The Consolidation of the After-Working-Hours Vocational Education Program and the Raising of the Academic Standard

All students of the Night College are at the same time employed. Everyday they have to maintain 2 or 3 hours of study aside from their production tasks. Only by consolidating their education can their academic standard be raised. At the beginning of the Night college, all the instructors were simultaneously part-time employees in the factories. On account of their lack of time for preparation, they could not very well maintain the college standards. But afterwards, when every department began to have at least one full-time instructor as its nucleus, the part-time instructors also developed their teaching techniques by improving their instruction materials and their organization. In this way the academic standard was gradually raised.

The degree of benefit the students receive from their classes directly affects their enthusiasm. If an instructor does not teach well, the students will not attend his classes. Therefore the instructors must collectively place their teaching techniques and organization on a competitive basis and ceaselessly strive to raise academic standards. In the matter of instruction emphasis, the students should absorb to the utmost basic theories; on the other hand, they are not expected to dwell much on those materials which they can learn while at work. Since the after-working-hours vocational education program lacks sufficient time for students to pursue independent research, those courses with emphasis on theory require a ratio of one to three for the time to

be devoted to problem solution and class discussion. On account of a number of leaves-of-absence, there are make-up classes (one make-up is required for every absence) and other supplementary aids for the absentees.

In order to consolidate its program, the Night College had to institute a practical yet necessary system of requirements. In order to implement this system of requirements, it was necessary to integrate political indoctrination with education. Otherwise we should be committing the error of unrealistic subjectivism and dogmatism.

In order to strengthen the student-teacher and student-college relationships and to solve the various existing educational problems, we have set up class committees (composed of a class president, a course representative, and a sub-committee chairman) to coordinate the class activities. In order to strengthen the relationship between the college and industry, we have also set up a system of factory representation for the purpose of fostering the students' sense of responsibility to both the college and the factories. Besides these, there are still other arrangements necessary to a student's daily routine.

The facts prove that if we maintain the necessary arrangements, strict requirements, and proper attention to political indoctrination, the college will develop, prosper, and will also receive the support of the students, who consequently will intensify their participation in college work. Conversely, if the college should simply drift along, the development of the college and the academic standard of the students will certainly be in jeopardy.